## News from the Wyoming Department of Health

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday, August 29, 2006

Contact: Kim Deti Phone: 307-777-6420

## Fremont County West Nile Virus Infections Climb Sharply

CHEYENNE ó As Wyoming West Nile virus infections continue to climb, state Department of Health officials said lab tests have confirmed that six more Fremont County residents have been infected.

The new cases bring the total number of human West Nile virus infections in Wyoming for 2006 to 12, with 10 of those in Fremont County. Wyoming had 12 human cases for all of 2005.

õThe sudden increase of West Nile cases in Fremont County is unexpected,ö said Kelly Weidenbach, surveillance epidemiologist with the Wyoming Department of Health. õWe are not certain why the number of cases is going up in this county and not in other areas.ö

Two elderly men are hospitalized as a result of the virus, and an older woman was hospitalized and released. In addition, a young girl experienced headache, fever and fatigue after being infected earlier this month. One woman reported headache, fatigue, rash and muscle aches and another reported high fever and rash.

õWest Nile virus can be dangerous -- even deadly,ö said Dr. Brent Sherard, Wyoming Department of Health director. õMy department has seen a stepped-up level of West Nile activity over the last two weeks, especially in Fremont County, and weøre urging people to take precautions against mosquito bites.ö

Mosquitoes spread West Nile virus after they feed on infected birds and then bite people, other birds and animals.

Sherard suggested that people follow the õ5 Døsö of West Nile virus prevention:

- 1) DAWN and 2) DUSK Most mosquitos prefer to feed at dawn or dusk, so avoid spending time outside during these times.
- 3) DRESS ó Wear shoes, socks, long pants, and a long-sleeved shirt when spending time outdoors. Clothing should be light-colored and made of tightly woven material
- 4) DRAIN ó Mosquitos breed in shallow, stagnant water. Reduce the amount of standing water in or near your property by draining and/or removing it.
  - 5) DEET ó Use an insect repellent containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide).

As of August 25, seven horses had tested positive for the virus in Wyoming with four in Fremont County and one each in Campbell, Natrona and Park counties. In addition, five

birds have tested positive with three in Campbell and one each in Park and Platte counties.

More information is available from the Department of Health on the web at <a href="https://www.badskeeter.org">www.badskeeter.org</a> or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

####